

State Senator • Deb Cherry news

03/05

For the Constituents of the 26th District

A Note From Senator Cherry

Michigan's budget is my main priority for the next few months. State lawmakers have joined together to balance the budget during the past two years and our success is hinged on a bipartisan approach to providing necessary services while minding the bottom line.

As a member of the Appropriations Committee, I pledge to look after Michigan's most vulnerable citizens – seniors, the disabled, and children. We must maintain adequate funding levels for programs that contribute to a high quality of life for our citizens.

My participation on various committees allows me to impact individual nuances of state government. As Minority Vice-Chair of the Appropriations Subcommittees for Community Health and Higher Education, I can meet the issues of healthy families and an educated workforce face to face.

I will keep you informed of budget developments and hope that you maintain your high level of interest in government matters. I welcome your comments at Coffee Hours and/or Town Hall meetings or by contacting my office.

Deb Cherry

How To Contact Me

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Deb Cherry**

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Clip and Save

Veterans Honored With Final Rest in Holly

Michigan veterans and their eligible dependents have a new place of eternal rest. The new 544-acre Great Lakes National Cemetery, located at 4200 Belford Rd. in Holly, is the second national cemetery in Michigan. It will serve the needs of approximately 460,000 veterans who reside in the eastern part of the state for the next half century.



Ft. Custer National Cemetery, the state's first federal burial ground, is located in the Battle Creek area.

At the new cemetery, an early turn over "fast track" area is being developed which will allow burials to begin in

May 2005, while major construction continues through mid-2006.

Administrative and burial operations will be conducted from a temporary office, committal shelter, and equipment building.

Phase one construction includes an entrance area and administration/maintenance complex, a public information center, and two committal shelters as well as 6,500 full-casket gravesites, 1,450 in-ground sites for cremation remains, and 1,768 columbaria.

For more information and assistance, you can contact Great Lakes National Cemetery personnel at (810) 695-2007 or toll-free at (866) 348-8603. Additional information about the National Cemetery Administration may be found at www.cem.va.gov.

Free Credit Reports Available

Michigan residents can now access their credit reports for free thanks to federal law and the cooperation of the major credit reporting agencies. Credit reports are free once a year.

Increasing cases of identity theft makes this offer ideal to anyone who wants to keep track of their credit record. The reports are free of charge and can be obtained by calling 1-877-322-8228 or via the Internet at <http://www.annualcreditreport.com>.

Identity theft is the fastest growing nonviolent crime in

America. It affects anyone from any ethnic group and from any walk of life. Experts advise consumers to refrain from making purchases over the Internet and keep close watch over credit card receipts from restaurants and retail purchases.

To get the report, residents will have to provide information including name, social security number, and address. The online service has numerous features to protect the security of the information sent and received.

Roadmap to Summer Fun

Despite high gas prices, motorists will still hit the road for summer trips according to the AAA - Chicago Motor Club. A predicted 230 million Americans plan to travel during the summer season, up less than one percent over last summer. This has encouraged consumers to become more sensitive to economic fluctuations and rising gas prices thereby causing some to modify their summer vacation plans.

According to the Travel Industry Association of America, nearly 80 percent of last year's travelers plan on taking at least one trip this summer. Twenty percent of travelers plan to travel

more this summer while 47 percent plan to travel the same amount as they did last summer. To help travelers plan worry-free vacations, industry groups suggest that families:

- Plan routes that will maintain constant speeds. Avoid two-lane roads with a lot of stops.
- Start trips early while traffic is light. Plan meal and rest stops to coincide with periods of heavy congestion.
- Keep an emergency kit in the car that includes jumper cables, basic hand tools, flares, a first aid kit, a flashlight with fresh batteries, and a cellular phone if possible.

2005 Hunter Safety Program

I am sponsoring my 9th Annual Hunters Safety Program with class lessons on Monday, May 9 and Wednesday, May 11,

6 p.m. – 9:30 p.m., at the Grand Blanc High School Auditorium. Range lessons will be held Saturday May 21, 8:30 a.m. – 12 noon at the Grand Blanc Huntsman's Club.

According to the Michigan Department of Natural Resources, hunter safety education is required under the following circumstances:

- Hunter safety is required if an individual was born after January 1, 1960.
- A hunter safety certificate or previous hunting license is required to purchase any Michigan Hunting License.
- Hunters anticipating an out-of-state hunting trip need to obtain a certificate prior to their trip; most states require hunters to carry their certificate when hunting and need it to purchase a license.

Please call my office toll-free at 866-305-2126 to register for this free program or register on my website at:

www.senate.michigan.gov/cherry.



Legislation I Have Sponsored

Senate Bill 57 – requires elementary students to participate in at least 30 minutes of physical activity a day or 135 minutes per week.

Senate Bill 61 – allows the formation of risk pools by local governments. This legislation was proposed to help expedite the clearing of titles for the Genesee County Land Bank. It is my hope it will make the process easier for other counties too.

Senate Bill 62 – allows spouses of military personnel to receive unemployment benefits

when moving back to Michigan due to the reassignment of their military spouse.

Senate Bill 63 – allows first-time voters to cast absentee ballots.

Senate Bill 250 – allows early voting to begin 15 days before an election.

For a complete list of legislation that I have sponsored, please go to www.legislature.mi.gov.



LEGISLATIVE UPDATES

Budget

Governor Granholm introduced her Executive Budget recommendations for fiscal year 2005-2006. The budget reflects General Fund spending of \$8.8 billion. As an established priority, Gov. Granholm has allocated the majority of the budget for education (24%) and health and human services (45%).

These budget recommendations are the beginning of a negotiating process between the governor's office and state lawmakers. I will keep you posted as the process unfolds.

Education

The Cherry Commission on Higher Education and Economic Growth, chaired by Lt. Governor John Cherry, recently issued a report with

19 recommendations to raise the standards for high school students in preparation for college and the workplace. Currently only about one in four MI students entering high school meets the goal of taking college-ready courses. The report and commission aim to improve preparation of high school students entering college or the workforce, expand college participation, increase degree completion, and maximize economic benefits for emerging business needs. For more information, please go to www.cherrycommission.org.

Gov. Granholm signed into law measures that replace the MEAP with the MI Merit Exam beginning in the 2006-07 school year. At the same time, the



governor moved to increase Merit Scholarships to \$4,000 beginning with the class of 2007 (today's high school sophomores). Every student who completes two years of college – earning an associate's degree, achieving junior status at a four-year institution, or completing a technical program would be awarded the scholarship, making Michigan the first state in the nation to reward students for completing two years of college.

Tax Time Tips

Officials estimate that \$12.3 million to \$49 million can be returned to hardworking Michigan residents through the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC). The Michigan Outreach EITC Initiative, led by Governor Jennifer Granholm, is working to increase collection of the tax credit by raising awareness and establishing volunteer tax preparation sites.

They are listed below for your convenience.

Genesee County

Burton Place

2287 S. Center Rd.
Burton, MI 48519
810-742-2030

Residents Only; Appointment Only

Burton Senior Citizens Center

3410 S. Grand Traverse St.
Flint, MI 48529
Tuesday 9 am - 2 pm
February 1 - April 12
810-744-0960

Appointment Only; E-File

Clio Area Senior Center

2080 W. Vienna Rd.
Clio, MI 48420
Tuesday 10 am - 2:00 pm
February 1 - April 12
810-687-7260
Appointment Only; E-File

Clio Senior Apts.

11535 Plaza Dr.
Clio, MI 48420
810-686-4300
Residents Only;
Appointment Only

Davison Senior Center

334 Main St.
Davison, MI 48423
Wednesday 9 am - 3 pm
February 2 - April 13
810-658-1566
Appointment Only; E-File

Forest Township Hall

130 E. Main
Otisville, MI 48463
Tuesday 9 am - 3 pm
February 1 - April 12
810-631-4997
Appointments Only

Grand Blanc Senior Center

12632 Pagels Dr.
Grand Blanc, MI 48439
Wednesday 9 am - 3 pm
February 2 - April 12
810-659-3202
Appointment Only; E-File

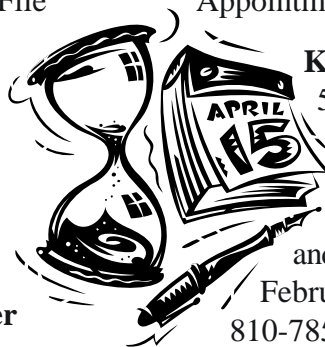
Krapol Senior Center

5472G Bicentennial Dr.
Mount Morris, MI
48458
Monday, Tuesday,
and Wednesday 1 pm - 4 pm
February 2 - April 13
810-785-2270
Appointment Only; E-File

Oakland County

Waterford Senior Center

6455 Harper Dr.
Waterford, MI 48329
Monday – Friday 9 am – 12 noon
January 31 – April 14
248-623-6500
Appointment Only; E-File





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MARK YOUR CALENDAR

Town Hall Meetings Scheduled

I am hosting two important Town Hall meetings this Spring. These events, which are free to the public and do not require reservations, are scheduled as follows:

Financial Aid for College Monday • March 21

7 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.
Carter Middle School Media Center
300 Upland Drive
Clio, MI 48420

This event will feature speakers from the Michigan Education Savings Program (MESP), the Michigan Education Trust (MET), and the University of Michigan - Flint Financial Aid office. These speakers will address issues dealing with maximizing financial aid and saving for your child's education.

Health and Fitness Fair Saturday • April 23

9:30 a.m. – 12 noon
Grand Blanc Middle School Gym
G-11920 South Saginaw Road
Grand Blanc, MI 48439

The Health and Fitness Fair will feature Michigan's Surgeon General, **Dr. Kimberlydawn Wisdom**, who will be available to speak with attendees. Also, screenings will be given for cholesterol, asthma, blood pressure, and foot screenings for diabetes. In addition, numerous other health-related groups will be present.

E-Mail Newsletter Available



I am currently sending out periodic e-mail newsletters to keep you

informed about what's going on in Lansing, as well as other important information from around the state. If you would like to receive this newsletter, please send your e-mail address to:

sendcherry@senate.michigan.gov

and I'll be sure to add you to our mailing list. Please also visit my State Senate website,

www.senate.michigan.gov/cherry

which will keep you up to date on my activities in Lansing as well as in the district.

State Maps Available

Summer travel is more fun when you know where you're going. For a FREE state map, please call my office toll-free at (866) 305-2126 or e-mail me at **sendcherry@senate.michigan.gov**.